



Media Tips: How to Speak with the Media

When reaching out to the media to promote your *National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month (Recovery Month)* activities, you may find opportunities to speak with the media. This year's *Recovery Month* theme is "*Join the Voices for Recovery: Real People, Real Recovery*," and is a perfect opportunity for people in long-term recovery to share their stories and the positive impact of recovery with the media. All reporters, editors, and producers from both print and broadcast outlets conduct interviews to enhance and better develop their stories.

Media Interview Facts: Interviews provide reporters with background information to develop their stories and direct quotes that can be attributed to you or your organization. Your interview is a time to answer questions, but it also is your opportunity to tell your story and present your message. This is **your interview**.

Six Tips to Remember Before a Media Interview

1. **Research and remember your audience.** Before the interview, explore the publication or broadcast outlet, the reporter, and the subjects he or she covers to prepare for what the reporter might ask. During the interview, avoid using jargon, terms, and/or acronyms unfamiliar to those outside the field. Be prepared to explain basic facts about substance use disorders, treatment, and recovery.
2. **Simplify your statements.** Reporters do not have time to sit through lengthy statements, so prepare three to four key points to get across and stick to them. See the sample key messages about *Recovery Month* at the end of this document for assistance in crafting your own messages.
3. **Repetition is paramount.** Not only is it okay to repeat your key messages, it's necessary. If you walk away thinking that you have over-emphasized your point, give yourself a pat on the back.
4. **Be knowledgeable and helpful.** Position yourself as an expert by providing as much information as you can about *Recovery Month*, substance use disorders, and recovery for people and their families. Ensure that everything you tell the reporter is supported by factual evidence that you can provide to the reporter afterward, if requested. If you are unable to answer a reporter's question, offer to find out quickly or provide additional sources and experts.
5. **Practice, practice, practice.** Rehearsing before the interview will enable you to answer questions more clearly. Also, prepare a list of expected questions and answers in advance and practice answering each one thoroughly.
6. **Adhere to anonymity traditions.** People willing to come forward about their experiences in long-term recovery can speak with the media without violating the "anonymity" clause of some mutual support groups. Many groups permit sharing stories as long as membership is not mentioned. Be sure to inform the media about the reasons for anonymity.

Strengthening Your Interview: Local reporters are interested in information specific to their communities. For this, contact your state's Single-State Agency listed in the "Resources" section of this planning toolkit. State and some local information also are available from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration (SAMHSA). SAMHSA's *National Survey on Drug Use and Health* provides national and statewide drug use statistics, the *National Survey on Substance Abuse Treatment Services* profiles state facilities, and the *Treatment Episode Data Set* is a resource for national and statewide demographic data, including commonly misused drugs. For more information, visit <http://oas.samhsa.gov/geography.cfm>.



Key *Recovery Month* Points to Convey During Interviews

You can adapt the following messages to discuss with reporters during interviews:

1. [Organization name] is holding a [event] on [date / time] at [location] to [share the importance of substance use disorder treatment and the renewed outlook on life that a commitment to recovery can offer / inspire people in need of treatment to seek help / convince our community's leaders to fund more treatment centers] so that more of [city's] residents will support those in need of treatment and their families. [(Local percentage) of city's residents / 9.2 percent of people nationwide] have a substance use disorder, yet only an estimated [(local number) / 1.6 percent of the population] receive treatment.
2. [Organization name]'s activities coincide with the 19th annual observance of **National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month (Recovery Month)**. Sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, **Recovery Month** is a nationwide celebration of people in long-term recovery from substance use disorders, their family's recovery, and the treatment providers who helped them.
3. This year's **Recovery Month** theme, "**Join the Voices for Recovery: Real People, Real Recovery,**" showcases true stories of people who have journeyed through treatment and long-term recovery—emphasizing that individualized treatment is effective. Whether people aim to regain success in the business world or rekindle a connection with their family, recovery can help them achieve their goals.
4. Recovery programs, such as [specific programs in your community], provide a broad range of treatment services and offer various care options. Frequently, people need family counseling, job training, or assistance paying for services, and these programs can help connect people with the services they need. A person who has access to treatment can reclaim a healthy and productive life, bring healing to the family, and will help [city] prosper.

Share Your Activities and Successes

Share your **Recovery Month** plans and activities with SAMHSA and the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT), along with the general public. Post them on www.recoverymonth.gov to generate momentum for the campaign, which will touch millions of people who are affected by substance use disorders.

Share community success stories and other outreach efforts during **Recovery Month** by completing the "Customer Satisfaction Form" in this planning toolkit. Instructions are included on the form.

Share samples of your organization's **Recovery Month** promotional materials with:

Office of the Director, Consumer Affairs
SAMHSA's Center for Substance Abuse Treatment
1 Choke Cherry Road, Second Floor
Rockville, MD 20857

About *Recovery Month* and Substance Use Disorders

- **Sample materials** from this kit are available electronically at the **Recovery Month** Web site at www.recoverymonth.gov.
- **For additional *Recovery Month* information**, visit the Web site or call 1-800-662-HELP.
- **Substance use disorder, treatment, and recovery information** is available at SAMHSA's Web site at www.samhsa.gov.
- **Information on treatment options in your area** and the special services available can be found at www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov, searchable database of more than 11,000 U.S. treatment facilities.